

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**In the Name of Allah,  
the Compassionate, the Merciful**







# **A CALL TO DIVINE UNITY**

**Letter of Imām Khomeinī,  
The Great Leader of the Islamic Revolution and  
Founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
To President Mikhail Gorbachev,  
Leader of the Soviet Union**

**The Institute for Compilation and Publication  
of Imām Khomeinī's Works  
(International Affairs Department)**

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*"If you hope, at this juncture, to cut the economic Gordian knots of socialism and communism by appealing to the center of Western capitalism, you will, far from remedying any ill of your society, commit a mistake which those to come will have to erase."*

Imām Khomeinī

## Foreword

A survey of the events of Imām Khomeinī's life will reveal the undeniable fact that the Imām had a prophet-like character surpassing that of any celebrated figure of the contemporary history. His character, however, can only be known through a thorough study of the Islamic Revolution which he founded and led to victory.

Among his prophetic acts was the letter the Imām wrote toward the end of his blessed life to President Mikhail Gorbachev, the then and the last Chairman of the Presidium of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The letter was written at a time when the eight-year war imposed on Iran had just ended and the Western media and political analysts interpreted Iran's acceptance of the UN Resolution 598 as a consequence of a shake in Iran's convictions. The enemies of Islam cherished the hope that the Islamic Revolution would be restricted to Iran and cease to have an impact beyond the borders of the country.

Under these circumstances the news of a message sent by Imām Khomeinī to the leader of the Soviet Union aroused the attention of all nations, particularly political leaders and analysts. The delegation, led by a high-ranking clergyman, Āyatullāh Jawād Āmulī, one of the Imām's disciples, accompanied by the Deputy Foreign Minister and a lady representative of the parliament, arrived in Moscow on January 7, 1989 and met with Mr. Gorbachev in the Kremlin Palace at 11 a.m. the following day. The meeting lasted for about 2 hours.

The composition of the delegation and the nature of the message once more attracted the attention of the world toward the Islamic Revolution and its great leader. The Soviet authorities in general and Mr. Gorbachev in particular had expected the message to be anything but a call to divine unity and pure Muḥammadan Islam. Following the tradition of the great prophets, the Imām started his invitation at a center of power with the conviction that his call would extend



throughout the world. The Soviet authorities' response to the call was political but the message, having been widely broadcast by the mass media and interpreted by news agencies, produced the desired effect. Inside the Soviet Union, the letter was kept hidden from the people, and even banned in Muslim republics, but it was met a hearty welcome by the Soviet youth and gave a boost to the already burning zest of Soviet Muslims for Islam. The letter was copied in thousands and distributed secretly throughout the country.

Today, a few years after this divine message was issued, the Imām's prophecy of the collapse of communism and the inevitable changes inside the Soviet Union has been fulfilled. The path which the Imām showed to Mr. Gorbachev involved a solution of problems resulting from Marxist ideology as well as an integration of political power and the preservation of the dignity of the Soviet peoples. The Imām warned the Soviet authorities not to be lured by the illusory haven of the Western world and not to fall into the trap set by the Arch-Satan. Are we not witnessing today the materialization of these two warnings?

The Imām's historic letter was an attempt at exporting the Islamic Revolution, not intended to interfere in the affairs of other nations but merely to provide an answer to the question of the souls athirst for divine teachings—souls forced to live for seventy years under teachings incompatible with their nature. Let us hope for a day when the propaganda spell of the Western world will shatter and the Westerners, too, will find a chance to grasp the spirit of the Imām's divine message.

*International Affairs Department*  
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The Great Leader of the Islamic Revolution and  
Founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran,  
To President Mikhail Gorbachev,  
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*In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Your Excellency Mr. Gorbachev,<sup>1</sup>  
Chairman of the Presidium of the  
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

With due wishes for the happiness and prosperity of Your  
Excellency and the people of the Soviet Union.

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<sup>1</sup> Born on March 21, 1931, in Stavropol territory in the Southwestern Russian SFSR, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev joined the *Komsomol* (Young Communist League) in 1946 and proved a promising *komsomol* member. He became a member of the Communist Party in 1952 and was named a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1971. He became a candidate member of the Politburo in 1979 and a full member in 1980. He owed much of his steady rise in the party to the patronage of Mikhail Suslov, the leading party ideologue. During Yuri Andropov's tenure (1982-84) as the Secretary-General of the Communist Party, Gorbachev became one of the Politburo's most highly active and prominent members. After Andropov died and Konstantin Chernenko became Secretary-General in 1984, Gorbachev became a likely successor to the latter. Chernenko died on March 10, 1985, and on the next day the Politburo elected Gorbachev, the youngest member of the Politburo, as Secretary-General of the CPSU.

Upon his succession, Gorbachev quickly set about implementing policies heralded by Andropov, and having retired an older generation of dogmatist or incompetent high officials, he liberalized and democratized the party and the USSR. He sharply criticized Brezhnev's policies that had brought the Soviet economy to stagnation and revealed Stalin's tyrannical excesses in an unprecedented manner. Gorbachev's tenure as chief political leader of the Soviet Union, characterized by glasnost and perestroika, marks a new era in the history of Marxism, and the changes Gorbachev brought about is the most significant event in the Western world in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In a speech he delivered on March 25, 1991, Gorbachev summed up the wrong policies of former communist authorities in one sentence, "In the past we were negligent of one thing—the intrinsic tendency of people toward religion."

### *A Call to Divine Unity*

Since your assumption of office there has been the impression that Your Excellency, in analyzing world political events, particularly those pertaining to the Soviet Union, have found yourself in a new era of reassessment, change and confrontation; and your boldness and initiative in dealing with the realities of the world is quite likely to bring about changes that would result in upsetting the equations of power dominating the world. I have therefore found it necessary to bring certain matters to your attention.

Even if your new approach and decisions are merely used as a means to overcome the party crisis, and to solve some of the problems confronting your people, your courage in reappraising a school of thought that has for decades enchained the revolutionary youth of the world behind its iron curtain is indeed worthy of praise. If, however, you are considering taking a further step forward, the first thing that will ensure your success is that you reevaluate your predecessors' policy of obliterating God and religion from society,<sup>2</sup> a policy that has no doubt given the heaviest blow to the Soviet people. Rest assured that this is the only way whereby world problems can be dealt with realistically.

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<sup>2</sup> Ever since the emergence of communist governments, the struggle to uproot religious faith has been at the top of the agenda of communist leaders. This endless struggle has taken different forms depending on the circumstances of religious societies. After the victory of the Russian Revolution, the struggle found an ideological basis. Marxism, in Lenin's words, "considered all religions and religious institutions as instruments in the hands of the bourgeoisie to exploit the non-propertyed proletariat." As early as 1919, the Russian authorities set up a complex machinery for anti-religious education and set about implementing administrative policies such as closing the mosques and churches.

Viewing Islam as a remnant of the pre-socialist stage, Marxists took two major approaches to confront it: to wipe out Islam as an alien element from the scene of public life by openly challenging it, and to assimilate Islam into Russian society by Russianizing Muslims. Stalin, the most notorious of all communist leaders, persecuted Muslims on a large scale by banishing certain Muslim peoples collectively to Siberia and Asia Minor. The astonishing number of Russian anti-religious publications distributed in Islamic countries is part of the Soviet government's universal struggle against Islam. The occupation of Afghanistan was the Soviet Union's last attempt to penetrate the Islamic world.

Of course it is possible that as a result of wrong economic policies of former communist authorities, the Western world, an illusory heaven, will appear to be fascinating; but the truth lies elsewhere. If you hope, at this juncture, to cut the economic Gordian knots of socialism and communism by appealing to the center of Western capitalism, you will, far from remedying any ill of your society, commit a mistake which those to come will have to erase. For, if Marxism has come to a deadlock in its social and economic policies, capitalism has also bogged down, in this as well as in other respects though in a different form.

**Mr. Gorbachev,**

Reality must be faced. The main problem confronting your country is not one of private ownership, freedom and economy; your problem is the absence of true faith in God, the very problem that has dragged, or will drag, the West to vulgarism and an impasse. Your main problem is the prolonged and futile war you have waged against God, the source of existence and creation.

**Mr. Gorbachev,**

It is clear to everybody that from now on communism will only have to be found in the museums of world political history, for Marxism cannot meet any of the real needs of mankind. Marxism is a materialistic ideology and materialism cannot bring humanity out of the crisis caused by a lack of belief in spirituality—the prime affliction of the human society in the East and the West alike.

**Mr. Gorbachev,**

You may have not in theory turned your back on certain aspects of Marxism—and may continue to profess your heartfelt loyalty to it in interviews—but you know that, in practice, the reality is not so. The leader of China<sup>3</sup> struck the first blow to communism and you have

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<sup>3</sup> Mao Zedong's policies in early years were based in many respects on, as Mao later said, "copying from the Soviets." But soon Mao took steps that were to lead to the breakdown of the political and ideological alliance with Moscow. The source of

struck the second and, apparently, final blow. Today we have no such thing as communism in the world. I earnestly call on you, however, not to get trapped, while tearing down the walls of Marxist illusions, in the prison of the West and the Great Satan<sup>4</sup> I hope you will attain the honor of removing the decayed layers of 70-year communist aberration from the face of history and of your country. Today those allies of yours that are genuinely concerned about their homelands and people are no longer willing to sacrifice their subterranean and surface resources to keep alive the myth of the success of communism—an ideology whose din of collapse has already reached the ears of their children.

**Mr. Gorbachev,**

When after 70 years the call, “Allah is Great” and the testimony to the prophethood of the Seal of the Prophets, Muḥammad (peace be upon him and his posterity) were heard from the minarets of the

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difference was what Mao called Sinification of Marxism—its adaptation not only to Chinese conditions but to the mentality and cultural traditions of the Chinese people. This manifested itself in the Rectification Campaign of 1952-53. This program aimed to giving a basic grounding in Marxist theory and Leninist principles of party organization to new members. But a second and equally important aspect of the movement was the elimination of what Mao called “foreign dogmatism”—in other words, blind imitation of Soviet experience and obedience to Soviet directives. After Stalin’s death in 1953, the ideological split with the Soviet Union became public and irreparable. In the ideological dispute that followed, Mao accused the Soviets of revisionism, the Soviets, in turned, called Mao a revisionist, a chauvinist.

Mao’s inflexible approach of his version of Marxism, on the one hand, and his obstinate stance against imperialism, on the other hand, isolated him from his Soviet alliances as well as the Western world. It was against this background that he proclaimed the policy of “letting a hundred flowers bloom”—that is, the freedom to express many diverse ideas—designed to prevent the development in China of a regressive political climate analogous to that in the Soviet Union under Stalin and to foster an enthusiasm for economic development in the country. Other movements such as the Great Leap Forward, and the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution that represented attempts by Mao to achieve these goals resulted in deep changes and revisions in Marxist ideology.

<sup>4</sup> A term applied by Imām Khomeini to the American Government to show its arrogant and diabolical character. The term was first used by the Imām during a lecture he delivered a day after the storming of the American Embassy in Tehran.

mosques in some of your Republics, all the followers of the pure Muhammadan Islam were moved to tears out of ecstasy. Therefore, I have found it necessary to remind you to reflect once again on the materialistic and theistic worldviews. Materialists consider *sense* to be the sole criterion of knowledge and are of the opinion that whatever cannot be known through the senses falls outside the realm of knowledge. They identify existence with matter and consider as nonexistent anything that has no material body. Inevitably, they regard the world of the unseen—God Almighty, Divine Revelation, Prophethood, and the Resurrection—as mere fiction. On the other hand, theists consider both *sense* and *reason* to be the criteria of knowledge, and maintain that whatever can be known through reason lies within the realm of knowledge, although it is not perceptible. To theists, therefore, existence is inclusive of both the unseen and the manifest. For a thing to exist it is not necessary to have a material body. In the same way that a material thing depends on an incorporeal thing,<sup>5</sup> sensory perception is dependent on rational perception.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Human knowledge is dependent on both experience and reason. Experience provides the “manifold” or material of knowledge, reason provides the necessary, infallible principles by which to abstract the general and to order the manifold of experience. In other words, human knowledge begins with sensory experience, which is an awareness of the concrete particular. Sense experience, however, gives the particular and never the general. Knowledge of the general is possible only on the possession of rational powers. Sense and reason, then, are two faculties which, while quite different, can supply objectively valid judgments of things only in conjunction with each other.

<sup>6</sup> To have sense and sense organs is prerequisite for perception and the acquisition of knowledge about the external world. Sense organs receive impressions of perceptible objects and transmit them as raw materials to the mind. In addition, sense organs can report to the mind the precedence of the impressions, but it is not in the capacity of sense to comprehend the relations or establish connections among the sensory impressions. For instance, through the action of sense organs we do feel the curative effect of medicine after we take it, and, this experience repeated, we deduced that “medicine is the cause of cure.” The implicit syllogism underlying this conclusion consists of the premise that “medicine precedes cure cannot be accidental.” In other words, in argumentative syllogisms, if, for instance, the minor premise is reached through sense organs, the major premise must be general, rational law so that a conclusion may be drawn. Thus, to deduce a conclusion from



The Holy Qur'an reprobates the fundamentals of materialistic thought and, addressing those who say: "We shall never believe in thee until we see God manifestly,"<sup>7</sup> proclaims "Vision comprehends Him not, and He comprehends all vision; and He is the Knower of subtleties, the Aware."<sup>8</sup> I should not like to present here Qur'anic arguments concerning Divine Revelation, Prophethood and the Resurrection which from your point of view are debatable. In fact, I do not wish to entangle you in the twists and turns of philosophical arguments, particularly those of Islamic philosophy. I will content myself by presenting one or two simple, intuitive examples of which even politicians can avail themselves.

It is self-evident that matter, whatever its nature, has no awareness of self. Consider a stone statue: each side is ignorant of the other side, whereas human beings and animals, we clearly observe, are aware of their surroundings. They know where they are and are aware of what goes on around them. There must be, then, an element in men and animals that transcends matter and is separate from it, living beyond the life of matter. Intrinsically, man seeks to attain absolute perfection. He strives, as you well know, for absolute power over the world; he is not attached to any power that is defective. If he has the entire world at his command, he naturally feels inclined to have command of another world once he is informed of its existence. No matter how learned a person may be if he learns of some other branch of knowledge, he naturally feels inclined to attain mastery of that branch of knowledge as well. Therefore, there must be some Absolute Power and Absolute Knowledge to which man is attached. It is God we all seek although we may not be aware of it. Man strives to attain Absolute Truth, so that he

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sense impressions depends on the reasoning power of the intellect, without which man's knowledge must be a pile of unrelated sense impressions.

<sup>7</sup> A reference to the Qur'an 2:55: "And when you said: O Moses, we will not believe in thee till we see Allah manifestly, so the punishment overtook you while you looked on."

<sup>8</sup> A reference to the Qur'an, 6:103: "The physical vision of man, working as it does only within narrow limits and being able only to see bodies, cannot comprehend the Infinite One. He sees everyone and everything but cannot be seen."

may be annihilated in God. Basically, the desire for eternal life that is inherent in every individual is proof of the existence of an Eternal World to which destruction cannot find its way

Should Your Excellency desire further information on these matters, you may command those scholars of yours who are well-versed in this field to study, in addition to the works of Western philosophers, the writings of Peripatetic<sup>9</sup> philosophers, al-Fārābī<sup>10</sup> and Avicenna,<sup>11</sup> peace

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<sup>9</sup> A school of philosophy founded by Aristotle and expanded by his disciples. It is so called because Aristotle taught philosophy while moving about. According to the Peripatetic philosophy man can reach the truth through meditation and reasoning provided he directs his thoughts correctly. Most Muslim philosophers including Fārābī and Avicenna were followers of this school.

<sup>10</sup> One of Islam's leading philosophers, al-Fārābī was born at Fārāb, situated on the Jaxartes (Syr Darya), the modern Otrar. Coming to Baghdad, he studied under the Christian doctor Johanna, son of Hilan. Another of his teachers was Abū Bishr Matta, known as a translator of Greek works. He next proceeded to Aleppo, to the court of Šayf ad-Dawlah, son of Hamdān, and led a somewhat retired life under his protection, assuming the garb of a Sufi. When this prince captured Damascus, he took the philosopher with him, and there Fārābī died in 339 AH/950.

Fārābī's literary production was considerable, but a great number of his works was lost very early. They were chiefly commentaries or explanations of the Greek philosophers, especially Aristotle. He wrote *An Introduction to Logic*, *A Concise Logic*, a series of commentaries on the *Isagoge of Porphyry*, the *Categories*, the *Hermenias*, the *First and Second Analytics*, the *Topics*, *Sophistic*, *Rhetoric*, and *Poetics*. The whole formed an *Organon* divided into nine parts. In the sphere of Moral Philosophy he wrote a commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, in that of political philosophy, he made a summary of *Plato's Laws*, and composed a short treatise on the *Ideal City*. To psychology and metaphysics he contributed numerous works, with such titles as *Intelligence and the Intelligible*, *The Soul*, *The Faculties of the Soul*, *The One and Unity*, *Substance*, *Time*, *The Void*, and *Space and Measure*. He also commented on Alexander of Aphrodisias' book, *de Anima*. Believing that Greek philosophy was a unity, he labored to reconcile Plato and Aristotle, and with this idea wrote treatises on *The Aims of Plato and Aristotle* and *The Agreement between Plato and Aristotle*. He also discussed certain interpretations of Aristotle proposed by Galen and John Philoponus, and composed *An Intervention between Aristotle and Galen*.

In the sphere of science, Fārābī wrote commentaries on *Aristotle's Physics*, *Meteorology*, *The Heavens*, and *The Universe*, besides commenting on the *Almagest of Ptolemy*. To him also is due an essay explaining some difficult propositions from

be upon them. It will then become clear that the law of causation on which all knowledge depends is a rational, not sensible law. Likewise, perception of general laws and concepts on which all reasoning rests is reached not by means of sensory experience but through rational

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the *Elements of Euclid*. The occult sciences interested him, and he left writings on alchemy, geomancy, genii, and dreams.

This great philosopher was also a talented musician, a somewhat exceptional combination. In this sphere he was at the same time composer, virtuoso, and theorist.

<sup>11</sup> Abū 'Alī al-Husayn ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Sīnā, or Avicenna, entitled *al-Shaykh al-Ra'īs*, or *Hujjat al-Haqq* by his compatriots, simply *Shaykh* by his disciples, and the *Prince of Physicians* in the occidental world, was born near Bukhārā in the year 370 AH/980. When Ibn Sīnā was five years old he and his family moved to the city of Bukhārā, where the young boy had a greater opportunity to study. At the age of ten he already knew grammar, literature, and theology as well as the whole of the Qur'an. When the famous mathematician, Abū 'Abdullāh al-Naūlī, came to Bukhārā, he was invited to stay at the house of Ibn Sīnā in order to teach him mathematics. Under his tutelage Ibn Sīnā mastered the *Almagest*, the *Elements of Euclid* and some logic, all of which he soon knew better than his teacher. Having mastered mathematics, he then turned his attention to physics, metaphysics, and medicine. By the time he was sixteen Ibn Sīnā had mastered all the sciences of his day and was well known as a physician. In another two years, thanks to the commentary of al-Fārābī, he was also to complete his understanding of Aristotle's metaphysics which at first had presented considerable difficulty for him.

Despite the loss in part or *in toto* of several of his major works, such as the twenty-volume *Kitāb al-Insāf* on the arbitration of Eastern and Western philosophy and the *Lisān al-'Arab* in ten volumes, over two-hundred and fifty books, treatises, and letters of Ibn Sīnā have survived. They range from the voluminous *Kitāb ash-Shifā* and *Al-Qanun fi 'l-Ṭibb* to treatises of only a few pages like *Risālat al-Fī l-wal-Infi'āl* and *Risālah fi 's-Sirr al-Qadar*.

His books can be roughly divided into four separate groups: the philosophical, religious, cosmological and physical, and finally the symbolical and metaphysical narratives.

*Kitāb ash-Shifā*, a vast philosophical and scientific encyclopedia, is probably the largest work of its kind ever written by one man. *Al Qanun fi 'l- Ṭibb* is the most famous single book in the history of medicine in both the East and West. In the West, this book became the only medical authority for several centuries and Ibn Sīnā enjoyed an undisputed place of honor. In the East his dominating influence in medicine, philosophy and theology has lasted over the ages and is still alive within the circles of Islamic thought.

argument.<sup>12</sup> Your scholars may further refer to the Ishrāqī<sup>13</sup> theosophy of Suhrawardī,<sup>14</sup> and explain to you that the flesh, as well as any other

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<sup>12</sup> See footnote 5

<sup>13</sup> One of the most valuable schools of Islamic philosophy, the philosophy of Illumination combines Neoplatonic and Islamic ideas. According to this philosophy, the source of all things is Absolute Light. That which is visible requires no definition, and nothing is more visible than light, whose every nature consists in manifestation. We may distinguish two illuminations, i.e. modes of being of the Primal Light: 1) pure, abstract, formless, 2) accidental derivative, possessing form. Pure light is self-conscious substance (spirit of soul), knowing itself through itself 'for whatever knows itself must be pure light'. Accidental light is related to pure light as effect to cause and only exists as attribute in association with the illuminated object.

Accidental light is of two kinds: a) dark substance; b) dark forms, i.e. quantities, and the combination of these two make up a material body. Since darkness is nothing but the absence of light, and light is identical with reality, the substance and forms of the universe consist of illumination diffused from Primal Light in infinite gradation of intensity. It follows that everything partakes of reality in proportion to the radiance which it receives and toward which it ever moves 'with lover's passion, in order to drink more and more of the original fountain of Light.' This perpetual flow and ebb of desire produces the revolutions of the heavenly spheres, the processes of nature, and all human activities. While the entire universe is eternal as emanating from Eternal Light, but contingent if regarded as the object of irradiation, some illuminations are simple, others compound and therefore inferior. The intelligences, the celestial spheres, the souls of the heavens, time, motion, and the archetypes of the elements belong to a higher world, which may be called eternal in contrast with all below it, though in the relation existing between them not posteriority but parallelism is implied.

<sup>14</sup> A figure of the Illuminationist School of Islamic Philosophy, Ṣihāb ad-Dīn Yahyā Suhrawardī, was born in Suhraward, near Zanjan, Iran in 1155. After studying in Isfahan, a leading center of Islamic scholarship, Suhrawardī traveled through Iran, Anatolia and Syria. Influenced by mystical teachings, he spent much time in meditation and seclusion, and in Halab (modern Aleppo) he favorably impressed its ruler, Malik az-Zāhir. His teachings, however, aroused the opposition of established and learned religious men [‘ulamā], who persuaded Malik to have him put to death. The appellation *al-Maqtūl* [the killed one] meant that he was not to be considered a *shahid* [martyr].

Suhrawardī wrote voluminously. The more than 50 works that were attributed to him were classified into two categories: doctrinal and philosophical accounts containing commentaries on the works of Aristotle and Plato, as well as his contribution to the Illuminationist School, and shorter treatises, generally written in Persian and of an esoteric nature, meant to illustrate the paths and journeys of a

material thing, is in need of Pure Light which has no material entity, that man's witnessing of his own truth does not take place by means of any sense organ<sup>15</sup> You may also have the scholars familiarize themselves with Transcendental philosophy<sup>16</sup> of Mullā Ṣadrā<sup>17</sup> (may

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mystic before he could achieve *ma'rifah* (gnosis of knowledge). For a brief account of his doctrines see footnote 13.

<sup>15</sup> Man's knowledge is of two kinds: acquired and intuitive. As for the former, this kind of knowledge is "acquired" through an intermediary, a conception of the thing, concrete or abstract, that is formed in the mind and is gained either through rational argument or sensory impressions.

Intuitive knowledge is the immediate apprehension or cognition of things without the help of an intermediary. It is evident that man's knowledge of his self, of his attributes and moods, is of the second kind and that man's apprehension of concrete particulars is dependent on the knowledge of his self.

<sup>16</sup> A school of philosophy founded by Mullā Ṣadrā (see footnote 17). After centuries of philosophical development in Islam, Mullā Ṣadrā brought complete order and harmony to philosophical problems for the first time. He organized and systematized them like mathematical problems and at the same time wed philosophy and gnosis, thereby bringing about several important developments. He gave to philosophy new ways to discussing and solving hundreds of problems that could not be solved through Peripatetic philosophy. He made possible the analysis and solution of a series of mystical questions which, to that day, had been considered as belonging to a domain above that of reason and beyond comprehension through rational thought.

By following the methods he had developed, Mullā Ṣadrā succeeded in proving "transubstantial motion." Earlier Muslim philosophers, following Aristotle, believe that motion is possible only in accidents of things, not in their substance. Mullā Ṣadrā asserted on the contrary, that whenever something partakes of motion, its substance undergoes motion and not just its accidents. Mullā Ṣadrā also discovered the intimate relation of time to the three spatial dimensions in a manner that is similar to the meaning given in modern physics to the "fourth dimension" and which resemble the general principles of the theory of relativity. It should be noted here that Mullā Ṣadrā based his philosophical arguments on pure reasoning, without appealing to intuition and illumination, but he found reason in need of illumination and intuition.

<sup>17</sup> Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050 AH/1640), also called Ṣadr ad-Dīn Shīrāzī and Ṣadr al-Muta'ālīhīn, was a philosopher who led the Iranian cultural renaissance in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The foremost representative of Ishrāqī [Illuminationist] School of philosopher-mystics, he is commonly regarded by Iranians as the greatest philosopher of Iran. A scion of a notable Shīrāzī family, Mullā Ṣadrā completed his education in Isfahan, then the leading cultural and intellectual center of Iran. After his studies with scholars there, he produced several works, the most famous of

Allah be pleased with him and resurrect him with the prophets and the pious), so that it may become clear that the nature of knowledge is different from the nature of matter and that intellect, far removed from matter, cannot be restricted by the laws governing matter.

I won't tire you further by mentioning the works of mystics, in particular Muhyī'd-Dīn ibn al-'Arabī<sup>18</sup> If you wish to make yourself acquainted with the doctrines of this celebrated mystic, send a number of your brilliant scholars, who are well-versed in this field, to Qum<sup>19</sup> so

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which was his *Asfār* (Journeys). *Asfār* contains the bulk of his philosophy, which was influenced by a personal mysticism bordering on asceticism that he experienced during a 15-year retreat at Kahak, a village near Qum in Iran.

Toward the end of his life, Mullā Ṣadrā returned to Shiraz to teach. His teachings, however, were considered heretical by the orthodox Shi'ite theologians, who persecuted him, though his powerful family connections permitted him to continue to write. He died on a pilgrimage to Mecca.

<sup>18</sup> Muhyī'd-Dīn ibn al-'Arabī, the celebrated Muslim mystic whose influence came to permeate the intellectual and spiritual life of virtually the entire Muslim world, was born at Murcia in Southern Spain in 1165. Much of his youth was spent in Seville, where he devoted himself to literary, theological and mystical studies. After visiting Granada and other Spanish towns, as well as Tunis, Fez, and Morocco, he set out in 1202 for the East by way of Egypt, whence he made the pilgrimage to Mecca. He did not return to Spain. Many of the remaining years of his life were passed in the neighborhood of Mecca, but he also traveled extensively to Babylonia, Asia Minor, and Syria, everywhere gaining disciples and spreading his doctrines through dialogues with scientists and scholars.

Whether we regard the extent of his theological writings or their influence on the subsequent development of Islamic mysticism, Ibn al-'Arabī can justly claim the supreme position among Sufi authors which posterity has accorded him, and which is attested by the title, *Ash-Shaykh al-Akbar*, conferred on him by the almost unanimous voice of those who are best qualified to judge. The list of his works drawn up by himself contains 289 titles, and some of them are of enormous length. The most famous and important is the *Futuhāt al-Makkiyah*. In this, as in many of his works, Ibn al-'Arabī professes to communicate mysteries revealed to him in ecstatic vision by prophets, angels, and even God Himself.

<sup>19</sup> Since the third century AH, Qum—the burial place of Fāṭimah Ma'sūmah (peace be upon her), the sister of Imām Riḍā, the eighth Imām from the Prophet's Progeny—has been a center of learning and pilgrimage. In the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, the great scholar and *faqīh*, Āyatullāh Hā'irī settled in Qum and reorganized the religious teaching institution. Following Āyatullāh Hā'irī, scholars from other cities came to Qum and it was not long before Qum was elevated to the status of the center of

that, by reliance on God, they may, after a couple of years, glimpse the depth of the delicate stages of gnosis,<sup>20</sup> which will be impossible for them to acquire without making such a journey

**Mr. Gorbachev,**

After mentioning these problems and preliminary points, let me call on you to study Islam earnestly, not because Islam and the Muslims may need you but because Islam has exalted universal values which can bring comfort and salvation to all nations and remove the basic problems of mankind. A true understanding of Islam may forever release you from the problem of Afghanistan<sup>21</sup> and other similar

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religious learning in Iran. At present thousands of students from Islamic and non-Islamic countries are studying in Qum. The students, having completed introductory courses, embark, depending on their interests, on a wide range of Islamic sciences, including jurisprudence, exegesis, *uṣūl* [the principles of religion or dogmatic theology], philosophy, mysticism, history, and *ḥadīth*

<sup>20</sup> A stage of gnosis, or *maqām* is a spiritual stage that periodically marks the long path followed by Muslim mystics (Sufis) leading to the vision of, and union with, God. The Sufi progresses by means of his own *mujāhadah* (strife or self-abnegation) and through the help and guidance of the masters (*shaykhs*). In each *maqām* the Sufi strives to purify himself from all worldly inclination and to prepare himself to attain an ever-higher spiritual level.

The order and number of the *maqāms* are not uniform among all Sufis. The majority, however, agree on seven major *maqāms*: 1) the *maqām* of *tawba* (repentance), which does not mean remembrance of sins and atonement for them but rather forgetting them along with everything that distracts from the love of God, 2) the *maqām* of *warā* (fear of the Lord), which is not fear of hellfire but rather the dread of being separated eternally from God, 3) the *maqām* of *zuhd* (renunciation, or detachment), which means that the person is devoid of possessions and his heart is without acquisitiveness, 4) the *maqām* of *faqr* (poverty), in which he asserts his independence of worldly possessions, 5) the *maqām* of *ṣabr* (patience), the art of steadfastness, 6) the *maqām* of *tawakkul* (trust or surrender), in which the Sufi knows that he cannot be discouraged by hardships and pain, for he is in total submission to God's will and finds joy even in his sorrow, 7) the *maqām* of *riḍā* (satisfaction), a state of quiet contentment and joy that comes from the anticipation of the long-sought union.

<sup>21</sup> Following a bloody Marxist coup in Afghanistan in 1978, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan on December 27, 1979 to prop up a friendly regime. Within months, 100,000 Soviet troops had dug in for a long war of attrition against Muslim fighters in the mountains. Opposition to the Soviet spread rapidly. Men were drafted

involvements. We treat Muslims of the world as Muslims of our own country and will ever share in their destiny.

By granting certain liberties to some of your Republics in matters pertaining to religious practices, you have shown that you no longer consider religion as the "opium of the people."<sup>22</sup> Indeed, how can Islam be the opium of the people—the religion that has made Iranians as firm as a mountain against superpowers? Is the religion that seeks the administration of justice in the world and man's freedom from material and spiritual shackles, the opium of the people? Only that religion is the opium of the people that causes the material and spiritual resources of Islamic and non-Islamic countries to pass into the clutches of super- and lesser powers and that preaches that religion is separate from politics. This, however, cannot be called a true religion; it is what our people call "an American religion."

In conclusion, I declare outright that the Islamic Republic of Iran as the greatest and most powerful base of the Islamic world can easily fill the vacuum of religious faith in your society. In any case, our country, as in the past, honors good neighborhood and bilateral relations.

Peace be upon those who follow the guidance.<sup>23</sup>

**Ruhullah al-Musawi al-Khomeini**

67/10/11 AHS

[January 1, 1989]

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only to desert at the earliest opportunity, and the Afghan military dropped from its 1978 strength of 105,000 to about 20,000-30,000 by 1987. As the result of this bitter war, a great number of cities and towns were devastated and the Soviet and Muslim fighters suffered considerable casualties. The continuation of resistance resulted in a series of short-lived, Soviet-backed governments, bringing more and more discredit upon the Soviet Union.

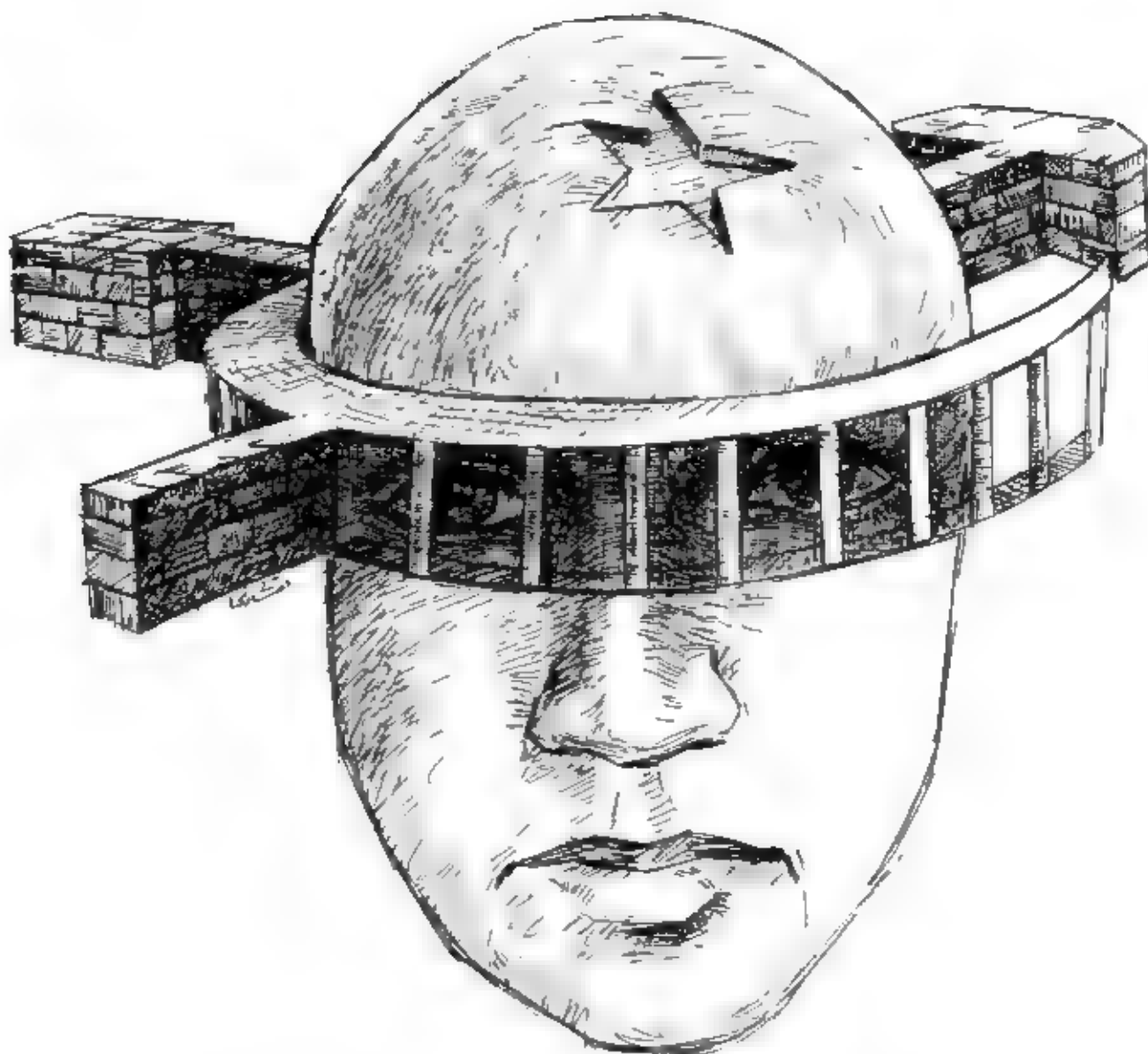
<sup>22</sup> A reference to Lenin's notorious statement "Religion is the opium of the people."

<sup>23</sup> A reference to the Qur'an 20:47. The verse contains a clear warning to Pharaoh of his end in case of rejection. Moses and Aaron were directed to convey this message. The full verse is this: "So you go to him and say: 'Surely we are two messengers of thy Lord. So send forth the Children of Israel with us, and torment them not. Indeed we have brought to thee a message from thy Lord, and peace be upon those who follow the guidance.'"

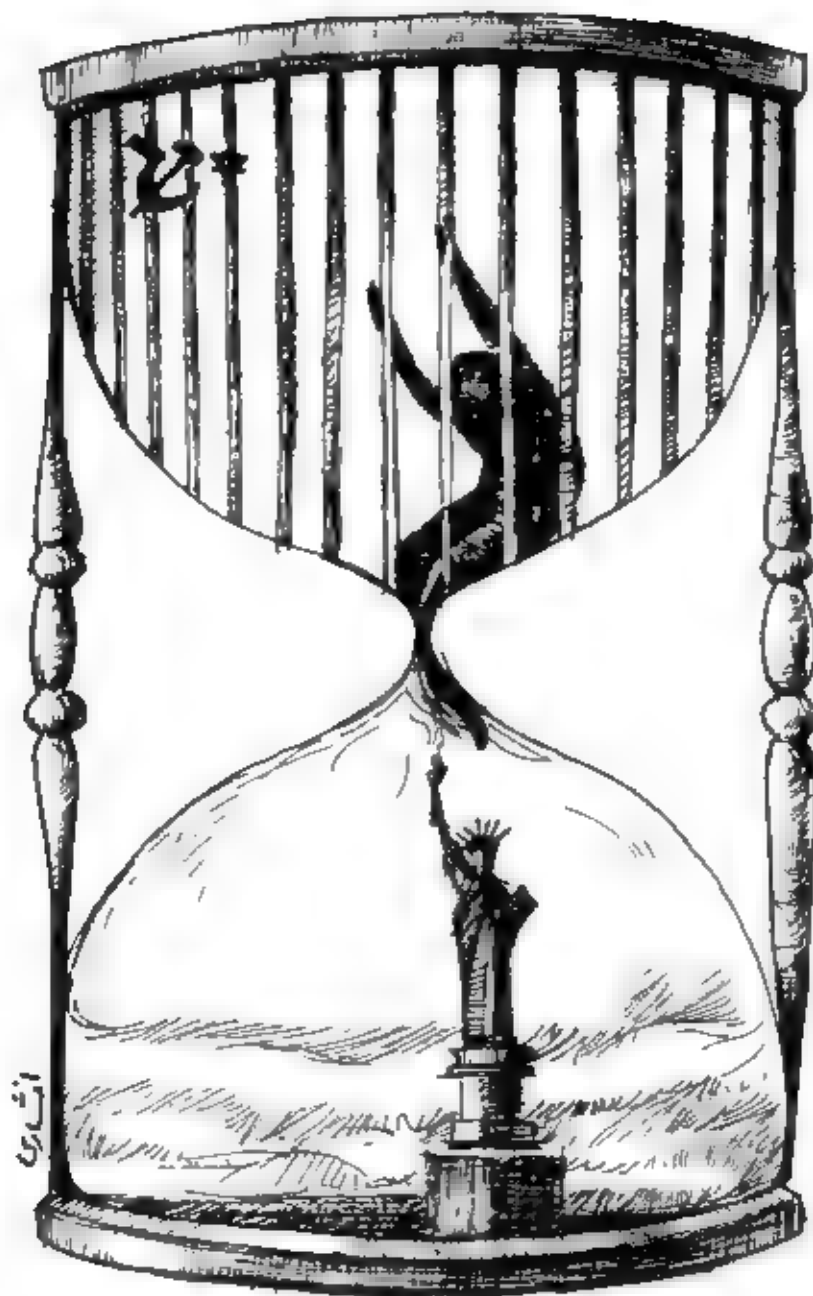




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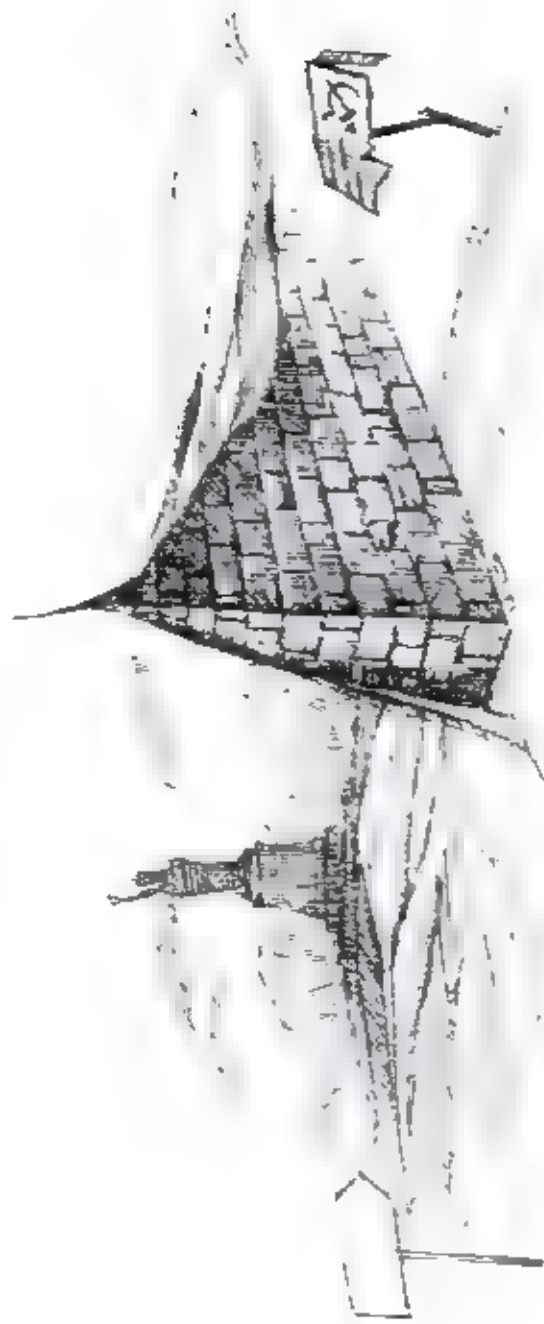


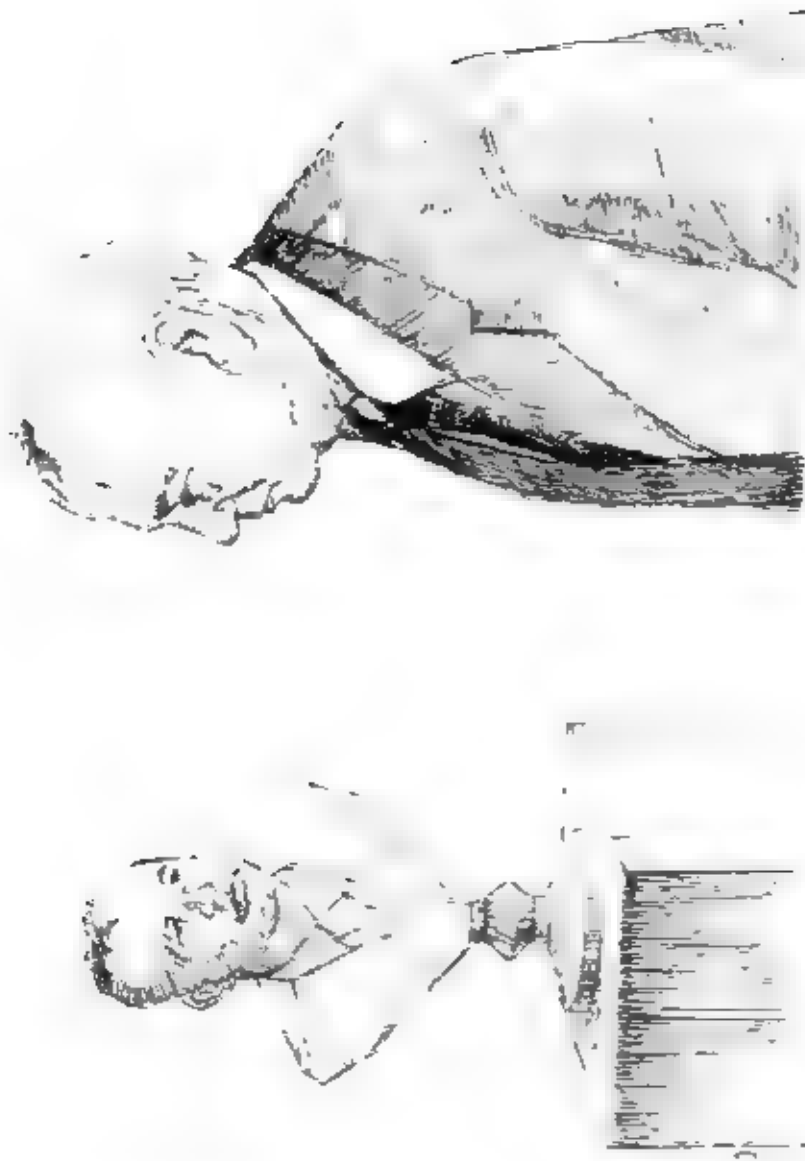
*" a school of thought that has for decades enchained the revolutionary youth of the world behind its iron curtain..."*



*"If you hope, at this juncture, to cut the economic Gordian knots of socialism and communism by appealing to the center of Western capitalism, you will, far from remedying any ill of your society, commit a mistake which those to come will have to erase "*

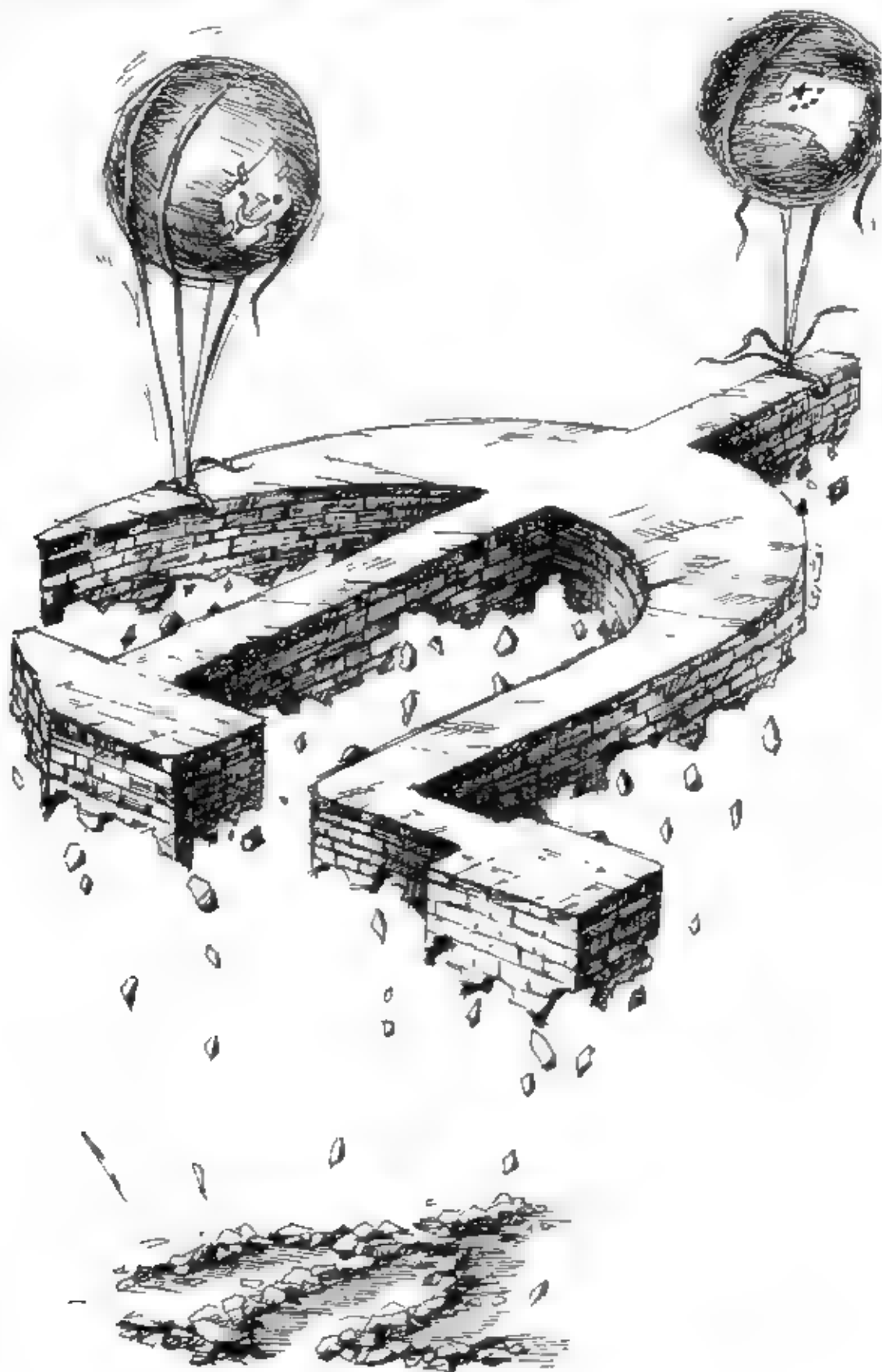
*For if Marxism has come to a deadlock in its social and economic policies, capitalism has also bogged down in this as well as in other respects though in a different form."*



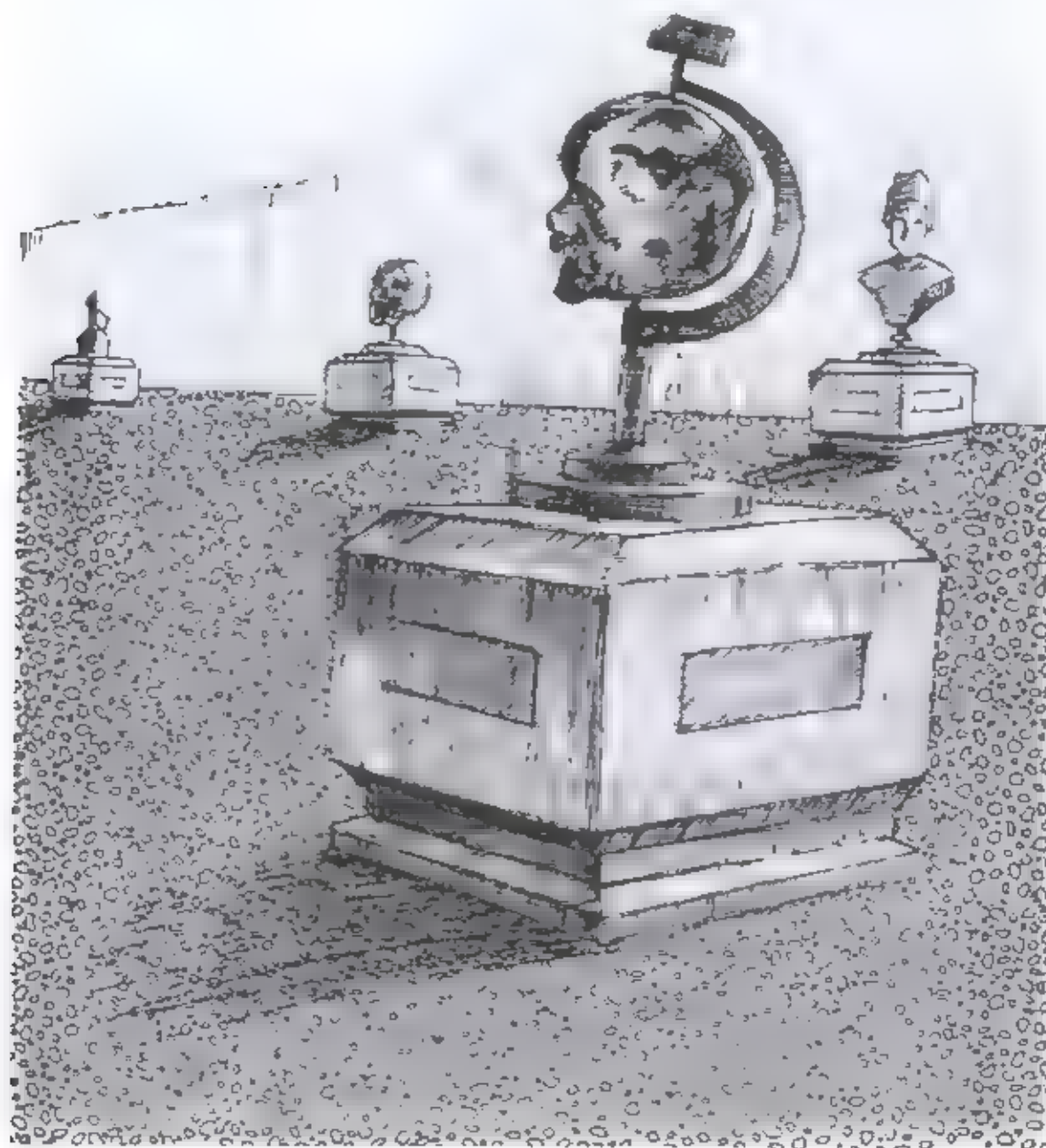


*Consider a stone statue, each side is ignorant of the other side, whereas human beings and animals, we clearly observe, are aware of their surroundings."*

*"The leader of China struck the first blow to communism and you have struck the second and, apparently, final blow "*



*"From now on communism will only have to be found in the museums of world political history."*



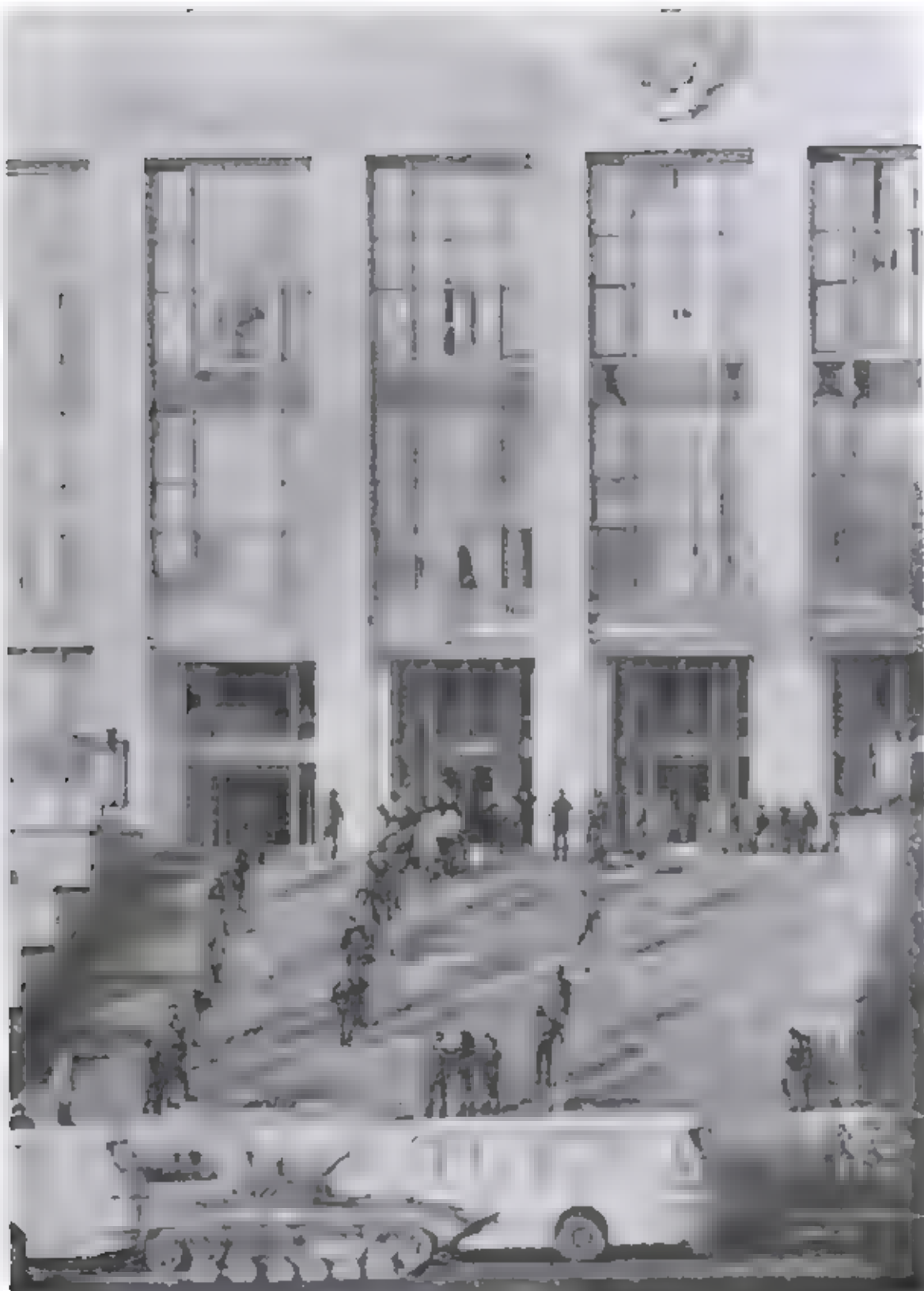




*The Berlin Wall crushes as the rule of communism is shattered*



*Lenin Museum in the background, a man poses on Moscow's Red Square with the first edition of the new Russian language New York Times. Available only in government buildings and large business establishments throughout the former Soviet Union, the paper is aiming for a circulation of 100,000 at three rubles a copy (March 1992 — Moscow)*



*The House of Representatives, last stronghold of communist supporters, is taken in the extensive and bloody raids of the forces of the Yeltsin government.*



*Russian President Boris Yeltsin (right) waves on June 16, 1992 as US President George Bush looks on during a White House arrival ceremony. Both leaders vowed to forge a new partnership (June 1992 — Washington)*



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## Glossary of Technical Terms Used in the Letter

### **D**

Divine Revelation

وحی

### **G**

general concepts

معانی کلی

general laws

قوانین کلی

Gordian knot

گره کور

### **I**

incorporeal

مجرد

intuitive

قطری

in practice

ثبوتاً

iron curtain

حصار آهنین

in theory

اثباتاً

### **K**

knowledge (gnosis)

شناخت

### **M**

mystics (mystic)

عرفا (عارف)

materialistic worldview

جهان بینی مادی

materialistic

مادی

materialism

مادیت

minaret	گلدسته
<b>O</b>	
ownership	مالکیت
opium	مخدر (افیون)
<b>P</b>	
Peripatetic Philosophy	حکمت مشاء
Philosophy of Illumination	حکمت اشراق
prophethood	نبوت
<b>R</b>	
reasonable	معقول
reliance on God	توکل
<b>S</b>	
spiritual	معنوی
spirituality	معنویت
stages of gnosis	منازل معرفت
Seal of the Prophets	ختمی مرتبت
sensible	محسوس
<b>T</b>	
the law of causation	قانون علیت و معلولیت
testimony	شهادت
the manifest	ظاهر
theistic worldview	جهان بینی الهی
the Resurrection	قیامت
the unseen	غیب
Trancendental Philosophy	حکمت متعالیه
<b>V</b>	
vulgarism	ابتذال
<b>W</b>	
witnessing (intuition)	ادراک شهودی



## THE INSTITUTE FOR COMPILATION AND PUBLICATION OF IMĀM KHOMEINĪ'S WORKS

The splendor of the Islamic Revolution and the role of Imām Khomeinī's personality, views, thoughts, and literary works in the occurrence and perpetuity of the Revolution; the need of the future generation for the works of the founder of the Islamic Republic and standard-bearer of the global Islamic movement; the publication and propagation of the authentic and complete works and thoughts of His Eminence; and the prevention of historical distortion of the Islamic Revolution were among the factors which prompted Hujjat al-Islām wal-Muslimīn Hāj Sayyid Ahmad Khomeinī to inquire through an elaborate letter about His Eminence's view on the manner of studying, compiling and publishing his own works and related documents, and to determine the authority in supervising and ascertaining the authenticity or otherwise of whatever is to be published in the name of Imām Khomeinī both in Iran and abroad. In his reply in the form of a written decree dated September 8, 1988 [Shahrivar 17, 1367 AHS], His Eminence assigned the responsibility of compilation and collection of all materials relevant to him to his own son, Hāj Sayyid Ahmad.

In consonance with this decree, the Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imām Khomeinī's Works was established and has commenced its activities. The heart-rending event of the demise of the Imām of the Muslims and the burgeoning need of the Islamic society to obtain His Eminence's guidelines and literary works have compelled this Institute to expand its realm of activities qualitatively and quantitatively. Along this line, the law on the preservation of Imām Khomeinī's works was enacted by the Islamic Consultative Assembly (the Iranian Parliament) on November 5, 1989 [Ābān 14, 1368 AHS] and approved by the Council of Guardians as binding and ready for execution. In this manner, pursuant to its momentous religious and legal mission, this Institute has embarked on planning and modifying its organizational structure within the framework of the following objectives:

1. Collection of all related documents and literary works of Imām Khomeinī as well as all works relevant to his personality, life, struggles, and thoughts written by writers or made by artists both in Iran and abroad;
2. Permanent preservation of the aforementioned documents and works through the most appropriate means;
3. Study and research on the literary works for the elucidation of the history of the Islamic Revolution, Imām Khomeinī biography, and compilation, translation and preparation of the literary works' compendium for publication;
4. Publication of the literary works' compendium through various means both in Iran and abroad, and propagation and dissemination of the Imām's thoughts and ideals;
5. Perpetual supervision of everything written or made by artists in the name of Imām Khomeinī; prevention of distortion of the Imām's speeches, writings, and events related to the Imām; giving replies to the inquirers and researchers on the literary works as the official center for the collection and preservation of the documents and works of the Imām. In order to attain the above-cited objectives, the main programs and activities of this Institute can be divided into the following five areas:
  - a. Collection of the documents and works, which include (i) collection of documents and works of Imām Khomeinī; (ii) collection of all works related to the Imām's biography, struggles and thoughts written or made both in Iran and abroad;
  - b. Permanent preservation of the documents and works;
  - c. Study and research, translation, compilation, and preparation of the works for publication;
  - d. Publication of the works and continuous revival and propagation of the thoughts and school of thought of Imām Khomeinī;
  - e. Supervision: Consonant with the decree of the Imām and enactment of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the Institute is the sole official source of whatever is to be published in the name of Imām Khomeinī.

**List of English Publications**  
(as of September 2002)

The following list of English publications of the Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imām Khomeinī's Works are available free on request:

- A Call to Divine Unity: Imām Khomeinī's Letter to Mikhail Gorbachev, Leader of the Soviet Union
- Father! O Standard Bearer of Islam
- Imām Khomeinī and the Culture of 'Āshūrā: Abstracts of Papers Presented at the International Congress on Imām Khomeinī and the Culture of 'Āshūrā
- *Kauthar*: An Anthology of Imām Khomeinī's Speeches Including an Account of the Events of the Islamic Revolution (1962-1978) (3 Volumes)
- Pithy Aphorisms
- Standpoints: A Selection of Stances Assumed by Hujjat al-Islām wal-Muslimīn Hāj Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī
- The 'Āshūrā Uprising
- The Last Message: Imām Khomeinī's Religio-Political Testament
- Palestine from Imām Khomeinī's Viewpoint
- *Hajj* in the Words and Messages of Imām Khomeinī
- The Narrative of Awakening: A Glance at Imām Khomeinī's Ideal, Scientific and Political Biography (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)
- Fundamentals of the Islamic Revolution: Selections from the Thoughts and Opinions of Imām Khomeinī
- Imām Khomeinī on Exportation of Revolution
- The Life of Imām Khomeinī (Volume I)
- The Position of Women from the Viewpoint of Imām Khomeinī
- Islamic Government: Governance of the Jurist
- *Ādāb as-Salāt*: The Disciplines of the Prayer (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)
- Reunion with the Beloved: Imām Khomeinī's Letters to Hujjat al-Islām wal-Muslimīn Hāj Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)
- The Greatest *Jihād*: Combat with the Self
- The Wine of Love: Mystical Poetry of Imām Khomeinī
- A Call to Divine Unity: Letter of Imām Khomeinī to Mikhail Gorbachev (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)
- *Forty Hadīths*: An Exposition of Mystical and Ethical Traditions (*forthcoming*)
- *Saḥīfeh-ye Imām*: An Anthology of Imām Khomeinī's Speeches, Messages, Interviews, Decrees, Religious Permissions, and Letters (22 Volumes) (*forthcoming*)

Kindly address your request for these books as well as for others in more than 20 different languages of the world to the International Affairs Department, The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imām Khomeinī's Works, P.O. Box 19575/614, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, or e-mail: [info@imam-khomeini.org](mailto:info@imam-khomeini.org).